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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 20, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT B. ADERHOLT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1900. An act to award a congressional gold medal to Jackie Robinson (posthumously), in recognition of his many contributions to the Nation, and to express the sense of the Congress that there should be a national day in recognition of Jackie Robinson.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1516. An act to provide for the establishment by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of five additional cemeteries in the National Cemetery System.

H.R. 3289. An act making emergency supplemental appropriations for defense and for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 3289) "An Act making emergency supplemental appropriations for defense and for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan for

the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. STEVENS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BURNS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUE, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DORGAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, and Ms. LANDRIEU, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 300. An act to award a congressional gold medal to Jackie Robinson (posthumously), in recognition of his many contributions to the Nation, and to express the sense of Congress that there should be a national day in recognition of Jackie Robinson.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

EQUAL RIGHTS: A PERSONAL ODYSSEY

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the evolution of the gay and lesbian

civil rights issue has touched my notion of fairness in government policy in very profound ways. Since I chaired the Oregon Legislature's first hearing on nondiscrimination some 30 years ago, I have observed the ebb and flow of the debate on gay rights, attended hearings, and learned the stories of real people. I have also developed a wide circle of friends and have many colleagues who are gay and in committed relationships. I have come to understand the equality for gays and lesbians as an issue of justice for us all regardless of our sexual orientation or political philosophy.

Along the way, I have experienced a couple of painful episodes that helped define my thinking. As a county commissioner in the 1980's, we enacted one of the first and most comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinances in the country. The backlash, however, from some of the extreme right was brutal. And faced with an opposing referendum that would threaten to divide the community, leaders in the local gay and lesbian movement urged the commission to repeal the ordinance. But that did not make it any easier to explain to gay citizens sitting in the front rows, some of whom were crying with disbelief and anger.

Twelve years later in Congress, I confronted the Defense of Marriage Act to create a Federal definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Until DOMA, marriage issues had not been a high priority for the gay and lesbian movement nor for Congress. But with the introduction of this legislation, all that changed when some people from the extreme right wing were pushing the hot button issue of same sex marriage in order to assure the political failure of the gay and lesbian civil rights agenda. The country was not simply ready to discuss same sex marriage in any rational way.

Hoping to deny the extreme right wing the opportunity to exploit this

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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